

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7228

INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSTDC

S E C R E T TAIPEI 6471

NO FOREIGN DISSEM

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

COMUSTDC FOR J-22

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MMOL, MILI, TW

SUBJECT: GROC EMPHASIZES MILITARY SELF-RELIANCE

REFERENCES: A. TAIPEI 6231 (NOTAL)

B. TAIPEI 6288 (NOTAL)

BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL:

1. SUMMARY: CONTINUING THE CURRENT EMPHASIS ON MILITARY SELF-RELIANCE, MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (MND) KAO KUEI-YUAN (7559/7608/0337), IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS IN THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN, DISCUSSED ON SEPTEMBER 30 THE GROC'S ABILITY TO PRODUCE ITS OWN WEAPONS (SEE REF A). IN ADDITION TO NOTING MND'S CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS HE ALSO REITERATED PREMIER CHIANG'S EARLIER STATEMENTS THAT THE GROC CAN MANU-
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FACTURE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, BUT WILL NOT DO SO. HE ALSO DIS-

CUSSED MND EFFORTS TO EXPAND DOMESTIC PRODUCTION OF WEAPONS THROUGH COOPERATION WITH PRIVATE INDUSTRY.

2. WHILE MINISTER KAO'S COMMENTS WERE DELIVERED IN THE CONTEXT OF SELF-RELIANCE, THEY -- ALONG WITH OTHER RECENT LIMITED REMARKS ON MILITARY PRODUCTION -- SUGGEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING AHEAD TO POSSIBLE RESTRICTIONS ON U.S. MILITARY SALES TO THE ROC AS A RESULT OF THE DEVELOPING US/PRC RELATIONSHIP. END SUMMARY.
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3. DURING THE INTERPELLATION PERIOD IN THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN ON SEPTEMBER 30, MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE KAO DISCUSSED THE GROC'S ABILITY TO PRODUCE ITS OWN WEAPONS. PICKING UP A POINT REPORTED IN THE PRESS RECENTLY, HE SAID THE GROC IS PRODUCING SIDEWINDER MISSILES (SEE REF B) AS WELL AS ITS OWN AIRCRAFT (F-5 CO-PRODUCTION), AND COMBAT VESSELS (PRESUMABLY THE TACOMA BOAT PSMM PROJECT) "IN COOPERATION WITH A FRIENDLY COUNTRY." HE ALSO SAID TAIWAN HAS PLANS TO PRODUCE OTHER TYPES OF MISSILES AND TANKS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

4. AFTER LISTING A WIDE RANGE OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS CURRENTLY PRODUCED BY THE COMBINED SERVICE FORCE -- RIFLES, MORTARS, ETC. -- MINISTER KAO SAID THE MND AGENCY IN CHARGE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (PRESUMABLY THE CHUNG SHAN SCIENCE INSTITUTE) HAS THE TECHNICIANS AND FACILITIES TO MANUFACTURE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. HOWEVER, HE REITERATED PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KOU'S EARLIER REMARKS THAT THE ROC WOULD NOT DO SO.

5. KAO ALSO SAID THE ROC WAS DEVELOPING WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT IN COOPERATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE INDUSTRIES, ADDING THAT MND AND THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HAVE FORMULATED A "PROJECT FOR COOPERATION AMONG MILITARY, STATE-OWNED, AND PRIVATE INDUSTRIES." HE ALSO SAID THAT UNSCHEDULED EXHIBITS OF MILITARY SUPPLIES HAD BEEN HELD; INDUSTRIAL LEADERS HAD BEEN INVITED TO VISIT AND OBSERVE -- AND WE ASSUME TO EXPRESS AN INTEREST IN PRODUCING THESE SUPPLIES.
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6. COMMENT: MINISTER KAO'S COMMENTS AS WELL AS OTHER RECENT REMARKS ON MILITARY PRODUCTION APPEAR TO BE PART OF THE GROC'S INCREASING PUBLIC EMPHASIS ON SELF-RELIANCE. THIS THEME NO DOUBT ALSO REFLECTS A ROC JUDGMENT THAT FOR VARIOUS REASONS -- US/PRC DETENTE, CONGRESSIONAL LIMITATIONS ON ARMS

SALES, U.S. REFUSAL TO SELL CERTAIN TYPES OF SOPHISTICATED
WEAPONRY -- THE U.S. CAN NO LONGER BE RELIED UPON AS THE SOLE
SOURCE OF MILITARY HARDWARE. THUS WE MAY EXPECT THE ROC TO
CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO EXPAND DOMESTIC PRODUCTION AND TO
DEVELOP THIRD COUNTRY SOURCES.
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7. CURRENT PUBLICITY ABOUT DOMESTIC PRODUCTION AS WELL AS THE
"UNSCHEDULED" EXHIBITS OF MILITARY SUPPLIES ALSO SUGGESTS
THAT THE ROC IS CONTEMPLATING PURSUING MORE ACTIVELY THIRD
PARTY CUSTOMERS FOR ITS DOMESTIC PRODUCTION. AS DEPARTMENT
IS AWARE, IN THE PAST TAIWAN HAS OCCASIONALLY FOUND THIRD
COUNTRY MARKETS FOR CERTAIN ITEMS. IF DOMESTIC PRODUCTION
IS EXPANDED, THE ROC MAY SEEK EXTERNAL MARKETS BOTH TO REDUCE
COSTS FOR ITS OWN ARMED SERVICES AS WELL AS TO FULL UTILIZE
INCREASE PRODUCTION CAPACITY.
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